

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News



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Chesapeake Forest Champion: Landowner Stewardship: Susan Benedict

Susan Benedict, '10, Centre County, was one of the winners selected in the Chesapeake Forest Champion contest in recognition of the International Year of Forests. Because the committee had a number of landowners nominated whose accomplishments were difficult to compare, they created a contest category for "landowner stewardship," which Susan won. Below is the nomination paragraph submitted by the Woodland Owners of Centre County.

The Woodland Owners of Centre County (WOCC) would like to recognize Susan Benedict, General Partner at Beartown Family Limited Partnership and manager of a certified Tree Farm, as forest champion with greatest on-the-ground impact, in honor of the 2011 International Year of Forests.

No one knows better than Susan that forests provide wood products, clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and a host of other benefits to people. She acts on her knowledge to educate and assist anyone who will listen.

- Her family's property contains the headwaters of Beech Creek, an important tributary to the Bay, and one that is impacted by acid mine drainage below her property.
- Susan writes letters to Congress, people, and newspapers in support of forests as providers of clean air and water as well as jobs for Pennsylvanians.
- She traveled to Washington D.C. for The American Forest Foundation to testify in support of Farm Bill conservation programs and maintaining tax benefits to forest owners, especially estate tax benefits.
- Among her many conservation projects she has planted pollinator habitat in a forested ecosystem with support of the Northeast NRCS Field Team and farm bill funds

- She heads the Centre County Natural Gas Task Force. She actively advocates for responsible gas drilling to minimize the negative impacts on Pennsylvania's forests and other natural resources.

- She is a generous host for groups at her property. She is determined that the Scouts earn all the conservation and ecology badges they can and often hosts overnight camp outs for that group.

- She recently hosted a Tree Farm-sponsored field day, and made sure her congressman was invited to meet other forest owners and hear their concerns. She invited her neighbors who were not WOCC members to this event so they could see first-hand what the organization is all about. Several of them joined the Association.

- She is a board member of WOCC, a member of the Penn State Extension Association-Centre County, representing forest owners, as well as a trained Pennsylvania Forest Steward volunteer. She is also a member of American Chestnut Foundation, Pennsylvania Forestry Association, American Forest Foundation, American Tree Farm Association, Forestry for the Bay, National Woodland Owners Association, and Quality Deer Management Association.

- In 2010 she presented a lecture on intergenerational land transfer at a WOCC meeting. She has spent many hours researching options and has helped her family develop a succession plan. She is concerned that as current landowners age they have the tools to pass their land to their children as "working" forests.

- Susan was honored at the Centre County Council for Human Services Annual Rose Cologne Volunteer Dinner in May 2011. As volunteer of the year, she helps area pre-K education facilities implement Project Learning Tree environmental education curricula to help young children connect with nature and the outdoors.

With the need for local champions of trees and forests never greater, Susan Benedict has the greatest on-the-ground impact of anyone we know and has a record of activ-

ism advocating for forests to aspire to. Congratulations Susan!

Sad News – Bill Park

Friends, we are sorry to have to share the sad news that Bill Park, past chair of the PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee and host of our 2011 Annual Meeting, passed away on September 9. Bill, Ruth, and their family embody what our program is all about – modeling and sharing a land stewardship ethic. We are fortunate to have had Bill as a part of our volunteer program, to have worked under his leadership, and to have shared in the story of his and his family's land. Please keep Ruth and the Park family in your thoughts.

Ibberson Chair: Jim Finley

We are pleased to announce that the College and the University have approved the appointment of Jim Finley as the "Joseph E. Ibberson Chair in Forest Resources Management." The Ibberson Chair's purpose is "to enhance the University's commitment to the Commonwealth by providing a distinguished faculty member in the School of Forest Resources, College of Agricultural Sciences, the opportunity to continue and further scholarly excellence through contributions to instruction, research, and public service." The objective for the Ibberson Chair is a focus on private forest landowner research and outreach. Jim received support from his peers in the School up to the Provost for this appointment. He plans to continue his work with Forest Stewardship and Stewards.

Join us in congratulating Jim on his new appointment!



New Video for Outreach: Green Fire

Recently our office acquired a viewing license and copy of the new video on the life and impact of Aldo Leopold. It is 73 minutes in length. We purchased it to use in outreach to private forest landowners. If you or your group would like to host an event centered around the video we will make it available for loan. Other states have had very successful field days/potluck dinners/video viewings that attract a large number of people who identify with Leopold's land ethic. Please contact Allyson if you are interested in using this tool in your outreach (we also have publicity information to help with advertising).

Green Fire explores the life and legacy of famed conservationist Aldo Leopold and the many ways his land ethic philosophy lives on in the work of people and organizations all over the country today. The film shares highlights from Leopold's life and extraordinary career, explaining how he shaped conservation and the modern environmental movement. It also illustrates Leopold's continuing influence, exploring current projects that connect people and land at the local level. Meet urban children in Chicago learning about local foods and ecological restoration. Meet ranchers in Arizona and New Mexico who maintain healthy landscapes by working on their own properties, and with their neighbors in cooperative community conservation efforts. Meet wildlife biologist who are bringing threatened and endangered species, from cranes to Mexican wolves, back to the landscapes where they once thrived. And, learn how Leopold's vision of

a community that cares about both people and land ties all of these modern conservation stories together, and offers inspiration and insight for the future.

New Class of Volunteers

On the weekend of September 30 - October 2, seventeen new PA Forest Stewards volunteers participated in their first weekend of basic training. While most folks hailed from the southeast region, we did have a few intrepid souls who made their way to us from western and northeastern Pennsylvania. South Mountain YMCA camp outside Wernersville was a lovely setting for our weekend event. We look forward to gathering with the new volunteers for their second weekend of training on October 21-23. We hope you'll keep an eye out for and welcome members of the Class of 2011!

Come Staff Our New Resources for PFLs Display at the Farm Show!

We mentioned, in an earlier issue of the PA Forest Stewards News, a new display that Dave Jackson and RNR Extension created to serve as a gathering point for resources and for all things related to private forest landowners. We've been invited to share our new display at the 2012 Farm Show, January 7-14, 2012. We're looking for PA Forest Stewards who might be willing to come staff the display and help direct other forest landowners to resources and advice.

If you think you might be willing to give some time at the Farm Show and staff the display, please contact Dave Jackson, drj11@psu.edu, 814-355-4897. Thanks for your consideration. We'd love your help!

Dates for Your 2012 Calendar

July 28, 2011 - PA Forest Stewards Annual Meeting, Dave and Judy Twining's Tree Farm, Carlisle.

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